

Chairperson's Report 19-11-09

We began our 2008/ 2009 season with a very enjoyable and successful Christmas walk in Grand Canal Dock hosted by the Dublin branch.

After our AGM in January 2009 plans were made to hold the Easter Rally in Rathangan. Sadly this event never took place due to lack of communication between branch officers despite a number of volunteers organising venue, food and entertainment. In the following issue of IWN an apology was issued to all members.

In light of this situation the acting committee called an E.G.M. on Saturday June 13th to resolve the issues facing the branch. This meeting was well attended and problems relating to communication, commitment, membership and finances were addressed. All members are now receiving regular notices of branch activities and the website upgrade is ongoing. It was agreed that the Permanent TSB shares would once again appear on the agenda for the 2009 AGM. The acting committee agreed to serve until the 2009 AGM.

A number of objectives were set at the EGM and here is a summary of what has been achieved so far.

1. To keep boats moving through the waterways and locks on the Kildare waterways. Kildare branch members were joined by members of other branches and the HBA along Kildare's Canals this year, culminating with the Naas 220 event in October, more on this later. Kildare Branch successfully promoted the use of the Grand Canal not just to its own members but to the HBA Heavy Metal and Waterways Ireland, who did a superb job ensuring that the passage to Naas was navigable.
2. To support the upcoming Robertstown Canal Festival this August Holiday weekend. Branch members attended this event with and without boats and the branch supported the children's fancy dress competition.
3. To adopt the reopening of the Corbally Branch line to navigation as a project focus. As part of the Naas 220 event a number of large and small boats ventured to the culvert on the Corbally branch line. Our visibility should help with a campaign to reopen this branch entirely to navigation.
4. To investigate the feasibility of re-commissioning the Dry Dock near Sallins. There has been no progress on this initiative to date.
5. To invite the H.B.A. to an event in the Kildare area was a huge success. Enda and his team from Waterways Ireland did a great job in the two weeks before the event; cleaning the canal and removing many years of lime build up from the lock walls, sills and gates. Martin, his team and IWAI and HBA volunteers saw all the boats safely through the locks. Riversdale Barges had a boat there and generously gave a weekend for four on one of their barges, as the prize for the raffle. A huge thanks to all the boat skippers and their crew, who travelled to the festival. Thirty-three boats made their way to Naas specifically for the event plus there were a few more in the harbour over the weekend. Highs included the parade of canal boats with crews in costume on

Saturday afternoon, Popeye made an appearance on 107B; the boats were lit up in the harbour over the weekend.

The Turf Boat trials and race with all entrants succeeding in building boats that remained afloat with their turf cargo, walk with Naas Historical Society a lovely welcome from the Lord Mayor of Naas Pat Clear, the launch of the HBA's new book 'Fine Lines – Clear Water'. On Monday we took a trip up the Corbally Line. The best bit of the weekend was the wonderful welcome and interest from the people of Naas. This event was so successful that the HBA have expressed an interest to return to Naas after the Dublin rally.

In my opinion the committee have done very well in achieving these objectives, a special thanks has to be extended to Pa & Teresa Keogh and Jim Connolly for the huge efforts they have put in over the last 6 months. Without these efforts it is almost certain that these events would not have happened. This brings me to the point of stressing that the incoming committee this year needs to be in a position to put in the same efforts in order to maximise the links we have made with Naas Town Council, Kildare Youth Services etc, it is only through this we can maximise the injustice of the closure of the Corbally Line. As some of you may already know my own position has changed since our last meeting, I will not be able to put in the same effort as before, in this respect if there is not a full committee as in Chairman, Vice Chair, Secretary, & Treasurer elected tonight I will have no further option but to recommend the dissolution of the branch.

Adele Picard
Chairperson
IWAI Kildare Branch